

Message Text

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42

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00

EUR-25 AEC-11 ADP-00 RSR-01 /050 W

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R 301124Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4836

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 1795

EXCON FOR COMMERCE/BEWT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ESTC, CZ

SUBJECT: POST-SHIPMENT CHECK

REF: STATE 147037

1. EMBOFF TOOK UP QUESTION RAISED REFTTEL WITH JOSEF KELLER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR CAPITALIST COUNTRIES AT MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE, ON JULY 27. JAROSLAV MERCL, MFT SECTION CHIEF FOR NORTH AMERICAN, ALSO PRESENT AT MEETING. NEITHER KELLER NOR MERCL WILLING ENTERTAIN POSSIBILITY THAT IBM COMPUTER SYSTEM IN QUESTION COULD HAVE BEEN SHIPPED OR DIVERTED FROM OKD FACILITY TO USSR, BUT THEY IMMEDIATELY AGREED TO BRING MATTER TO ATTENTION "HIGHER AUTHORITIES" IN MINISTRY AND SEEK GUIDANCE ON ALLOWING EMBASSY OFFICER TO INSPECT SITE IN ORDER DETERMINE TRUTH OF MATTER. KELLER AGREED TO NOTIFY EMBASSY SOONEST OF DECISION REACHED.

2. KELLER RECALLED THAT ISSUE OF PERIODIC ON-SITE INSPECTION OF IMPORTANT INSTALLATIONS OF SENSITIVE EQUIPMENT LICENSED FOR EXPORT FROM U.S. HAD BEEN RAISED SOME FIVE YEARS AGO, AND THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN REACHED AT TIME. HE SAID DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THIS ISSUE WERE IN "ARCHIVES" AND WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE REVIEWED BEFORE AN ANSWER TO CASE
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AT HAND COULD BE GIVEN.

3. BOTH KELLER AND MERCL RECOGNIZED SERIOUSNESS OF ALLEGATION AND EXPRESSED CONCERN LEST PENDING REQUESTS FOR EXCEPTIONS PRESENTLY BEFORE OFFICE OF EXPORT CONTROL MIGHT BE AFFECTED BY SUCH "RUMORS." DRAWING ON GUIDANCE PARA (4) REFTTEL, EMBOFF SUGGESTED THAT FUTURE EXCEPTIONS IN CASE OF LARGE COMPUTER EXPORTS FROM U.S. COULD INDEED BE AFFECTED BY REPORT THAT DIVERSION OF IMPORTANT COMPUTER SYSTEM HAD OCCURRED IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

4. COMMENT: WITHOUT KNOWING SOURCE OF REPORT ON WHICH COMMERCE REQUEST BASED, WE WONDER AT THIS ALLEGATION ESPECIALLY SINCE IBM REPORTED IN EARLY JULY THAT COMPUTER STILL IN PLACE. END-USERS HERE KNOW FULL WELL WHAT CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH AN ACTION WOULD BE AND IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT WOULD SANCTION A DIVERSION OF THIS NATURE IN LIGHT OF ITS LONG-TERM NEEDS FOR WESTERN COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT. WE AGREE WITH COMMERCE HOWEVER THAT THIS RUMOR, IF IT IS ONE, MUST BE SCOTCHED AND WILL BEND EVERY EFFORT TO ACHIEVING AN ON-SITE INSPECTION WITHOUT DELAY.
SHERER

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